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206 closed position when activated and to discontinue maintaining the lid in the closed position when deactivated. The press plate is vertically slidable within the hopper, with the hopper being adapted to accept dough between the lid and the press plate. The press plate is adapted to be driven towards the lid in order to compress the dough between the press plate and the lid within the hopper. The latch assembly is automatically activated to maintain the lid in the closed position while the press plate is being driven towards the lid. The latch assembly is automatically deactivated to discontinue maintaining the lid in the closed position after the dough has been compressed and divided within the hopper.--

In the Claims:

Please amend claims 3, 18, 19, 41, 50, 51 and 62 as follows.

207 3. (Twice Amended) The food press of claim 1, wherein:
the press plate has a vertical stroke between a top of the hopper and a bottom of the hopper; and
the press plate is configured to move towards the bottom of the hopper when pressure applied to a top of the press plate from the food within the hopper reaches a predetermined level.

208 18. (Amended) A food press comprising:
a hopper with a lid, the lid having an open position and a closed position;
a latch assembly adapted to maintain the lid in the closed position when activated and to discontinue maintaining the lid in the closed position when deactivated;
a press plate vertically slidable within the hopper;
the hopper being adapted to accept food between the lid and the press plate;
the press plate adapted to be driven towards the lid in order to compress the food between the press plate and the lid within the hopper;
wherein the latch assembly automatically deactivates to discontinue maintaining the lid in the closed position after the food has been compressed within the hopper.

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19. (Twice Amended) The food press of claim 18, wherein:

the press plate has a vertical stroke between a top of the hopper and a bottom of the hopper; and

the press plate is configured to move towards the bottom of the hopper when pressure applied to a top of the press plate from the food when the hopper reaches a predetermined level.

41. (Amended) The food press of claim 39, wherein:

the press plate has a vertical stroke between a top of the hopper and a bottom of the hopper; and

the press plate is configured to move towards the bottom of the hopper when pressure applied to a top of the press plate from the food within the hopper reaches a predetermined level.

50. (Amended) A food press comprising:

a hopper with a lid, the lid having an open position and a closed position;

a closure mechanism comprising a first member on the lid and a second member on the hopper configured to interact to maintain the lid in the closed position when the closure mechanism is activated and to discontinue maintaining the lid in the closed position when the closure mechanism is deactivated;

a press plate vertically slidable within the hopper;

the hopper being adapted to accept food between the lid and the press plate;

the press plate adapted to be driven towards the lid in order to compress the food between the press plate and the lid within the hopper;

wherein the closure mechanism automatically deactivates to discontinue maintaining the lid in the closed position after the food has been compressed within the hopper.

51. (Amended) The food press of claim 50, wherein:

the press plate has a vertical stroke between a top of the hopper and a bottom of the

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hopper; and

the press plate is configured to move towards the bottom of the hopper when pressure applied to a top of the press plate from the dough when the hopper reaches a predetermined level.

62. (Amended) A food press comprising:

a hopper with a lid, the lid having an open position and a closed position;

means for maintaining the lid in the closed position when the means for maintaining is activated and to discontinue maintaining the lid in the closed position when the means for maintaining is deactivated;

a press plate vertically slidable within the hopper;

the hopper being adapted to accept food between the lid and the press plate;

the press plate adapted to be driven towards the lid in order to compress the food between the press plate and the lid within the hopper;

wherein the means for maintaining automatically deactivates to discontinue maintaining the lid in the closed position after the food has been compressed within the hopper.